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SENSITIVE  
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STATE FOR AF/FO, SE GRATION, S/USSES, AF/RSA, AF/E, AF/W,  
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STATE ALSO FOR NEA/MAG AND IO/UNP  
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SUBJECT: AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT ON RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS IN  
AFRICA

11. (U) The African Union (AU) will hold a Special Session of the Assembly of the Union (heads of state) in Tripoli, Libya, on August 31. According to AU Commission officials, the Special Session will be devoted to the consideration and resolution of conflicts in Africa, and specifically those in the Horn of Africa, Sudan, and the Great Lakes region, and post-conflict reconstruction, such as in Guinea-Bissau. Working groups and smaller meetings will take place on August 130.

12. (U) The decision to hold a Special Session was taken by African heads of state during the AU Summit in Sirte in early July. Libyan Leader Moammar Qadhafi reportedly wanted this event to be held on the margins of the celebrations marking the 40th anniversary of the Libyan Revolution.

13. (SBU) AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ramtane Lamamra, told USAU Charge that Qadhafi insisted that the Special Session be at the executive level (heads of state). Qadhafi did not want this to be conducted in "business as usual manner," Lamamra said. Moreover, Qadhafi reportedly will use the forum in Tripoli to place blame "on whatever actor is blocking peace processes," Lamamra said. Addressing those who are skeptical that anything serious can come out of a one-day Special Session devoted to resolution of conflicts in Africa, Lamamra said Qadhafi intends for there to be decisions taken.

14. (SBU) In discussions about the upcoming Special Session, there has been no mention of Madagascar and Guinea, two countries that are suspended from the AU following coups d'etat. Similarly, there has been no mention of Niger, where a constitutional crisis is unfolding and where AU, UN, and ECOWAS diplomatic initiatives have thus far failed to persuade President Tandja to step down after his mandate expires later this year.

15. (SBU) Lamamra, who stopped in Tripoli for consultations with Qadhafi on his way to New York 10 days ago, said the AU Peace and Security Department "welcomes the opportunity to put African leaders in a position to contribute toward the resolution of conflicts in Africa."

16. (SBU) Observers and guests, especially P-5 members, are "expected to attend" the Special Session in Tripoli, Lamamra said. An official invitation from the Government of Libya and the AU Commission should be issued any day, he added.

17. (SBU) Comment: August is normally a quiet month for the AU Commission with many staffers taking extended leave. It is unclear how much advance work can actually be accomplished with the Special Session less than a month away. One senior AU contact grumbled to us that there also needs to be discussions between the Peace and Security Council and the Peace and Security Department about division of labor and responsibilities. End Comment.  
GONZALES